BATMAN

Written

by

Julie Hickson

Based on

Ideas and Concepts

by

Tim Burton

and

Julie Hickson

OUTLINE

October 21, 1985

BATMAN

ACT ONE

"LOSS"

A black screen. Suddenly, the edges erupt into brightly curling flames, framing the image with a vivid, sinister glow.

A wild face appears center-screen: shock-white skin, radioactive-green hair standing on end as if permanently electrified and red, red lips slashed into a chin so pointed it's like a demented exaggeration of a clown face. There's no mistaking this person. It can only be: THE JOKER!

Laughing insanely, he turns and looks directly at us, nailing us into our seats with his maniacal gaze...

THE JOKER

Laughing.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY

An aerial view. Late afternoon. It's a little New York, a little Max Fleisher, a lot of Fritz Lang's Metropolis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gotham is the ultimate comic book city, and on some deep level we recognize it instantly from years of comic-book art, but simultaneously encounter all the wonder and surprise inherent in experiencing the realization of a place of myth.

Aerial tramways loop through the city like sci-fi dreams, fantastic Langiam architecture stretches skyward, bright blimps slide by, cartoonizing the cityscape, windows flicker incandescently with light, and traffic squirms through the lacy thoroughfares like a funeral march of fireflies.

The city shimmers and steams after a hot day; the shadows are long and blue, the buildings melt into hues of orange, purple, rose -- Easter egg-dyed by the last lingering fingers of a gaudy sunset.

CUT TO:

EST. GOTHAM CITY MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE

The room is packed, including the usually empty upper balconies. Overhead, fans are making feeble attempts at penetrating the humid atmosphere. At the front of the room is THOMAS WAYNE, counsel for the Senate-appointed Subcommittee on Investigation into Racketeering, delivering an impassioned speech to an obviously polarized caucus room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Thomas is in his mid-30's, and a man of rare sensitivity, strength and passion which he masks behind a sardonic, throwaway humor. He is a romantic disguised as a realist.

THOMAS
... Our country's hard-won unions are being increasingly infiltrated by hoodlums and mobsters whose only interest in them is in milking their substantial welfare and pension fund for various illegal activities!

Half the room erupts into wild applause. The other half remains darkly withdrawn. Thomas points dramatically to a lumpish, brooding man sitting behind a table flanked by lawyers and statisticians. It's the king of the mobsters, RUBERT THORNE.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
We have irrefutable proof that this man is using the union solely as an instrumentality for private profit!

CUT TO:

The balconies.

Kneeling forward in the crowded front row, so as to have a better view, sits BRUCE WAYNE, Thomas' ten-year-old son, who is the spitting image of his father. Bruce watches his father with awe. Somewhere near him a man whispers to his neighbor -- something highly complimentary about Thomas's performance. Bruce overhears this and, although unable to grasp its full meaning, it pleasantly underscores his sense of his father's importance. At that moment, Thomas glances up at his son and flashes him a wide smile.

CUT TO:

WAYNE MANOR - SOMEWHERE IN THE NORTHERN SUBURBS OF GOTHAM CITY

The house is filled with the high-spiritedness and laughter of a happy family. Thomas and Bruce have just arrived home from the courthouse, dashing in the front door -- neck-and-neck, like two kids. Bruce achieves the bottom of the steps first, tagging the bannister with obvious glee.

BRUCE
(breathlessly)
I win... I win!

Undaunted, Thomas continues past him, flying up the stairs three at a time.

THOMAS
I meant the top, not the bottom!

Bruce's face falls, and he rushes up the stairs behind his father.

BRUCE
No fair! You didn't say!

Bruce grabs his father's leg, trying to impede his progress to the top. The result is that they both collapse at the top of the stairs, laughing and tagging the bannister at the same time.

BRUCE & THOMAS
Tie!

Two well-dressed legs enter the frame. Bruce and Thomas simultaneously look up from their low angle to discover: ALFRED PENNYWORTH, the beloved family butler, looking down at them with a level of bemused irony available only to someone of his rigorous training and formal background. Although he broadcasts a formidable exterior, Alfred is the glue and heartbeat of the Wayne family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED
(dryly)
Actually, sirs -- I think it's called a draw.

Bruce and Thomas stand up and shake themselves off. In this family, all such displays of comradery and affection are completely the norm.

BRUCE
(delighted to see him)
Alfred! What's for dinner? I'm starved!

ALFRED
Go on into the drawing room, sir. I think it's a bit of a surprise, and I wouldn't dare steal the wind out of your mother's sails.

Bruce races off down the hall. Alfred's countenance changes.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
How did it go today, sir?

THOMAS
(quietly)
Well, I think we're nailing Rubert Thorne, and we have enough evidence to implicate a fair number of his cronies, but I'm very concerned about the possibility of retribution -- not so much toward me, but Bruce and Martha...

ALFRED
I'm well aware of the risks, sir. If there's ever anything I can do...

THOMAS
I know that, Alfred. Frankly, it's the only thing giving me any peace of mind lately. I sometimes wonder if I have the right to expose my family to the risks...
(a beat)
... Will you promise me something, Alfred?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED
Anything, sir.

THOMAS
If something should happen, promise that you'll take care of Bruce and Martha.

ALFRED
(a rare lapse in the formality)
My friend, like they were my own.

Standing at the top of the stairs, the two men clasp hands in a seal that is both friendship and death-pact.

From out of the dining room doorway pops MARTHA WAYNE, Thomas's wife, who is in her mid-30's, intensely feminine and gently beautiful. She is wearing a breathtaking fairy costume complete with a silvery wreath of leaves woven throughout her auburn hair.

MARTHA
Hey! Why all the long faces? Am I going to have to eat all this by myself? If you don't hurry up, we'll miss the opera and the ball!

Bruce appears, tears past Alfred and Thomas, almost knocking them down, now wearing a spectacular harlequin costume.

BRUCE
Nuh-uh. You're going to have to share some of it with me!

THOMAS
(his worry melting into a smile)
We'll be right down, darling.

CUT TO:

Dinner time.

It's a happy event. The meal is indeed a feast, which by now litters the entire table.

Martha is charmingly regaling Bruce and Alfred with a story.

MARTHA
When your father was running the campaign for the President, they took a train across the country making speeches along the way at various whistle stops. During one speech, a large group of children were making such a racket that the President couldn't even begin his speech. Your father vaulted off the train and shouted, 'I can beat anyone from here to the lamppost,' and took off, with the whole mob hot on his heels. He beat them, too!

While they all laugh, the phone rings in the next room.

Alfred answers it. In a moment he comes back.

ALFRED
(to Thomas)
It's for you, sir.

THOMAS
Thank you, Alfred. Excuse me, all.

CUT TO:

Study.

Thomas is on the phone. His face has suddenly drained of color.

THOMAS
(hissing through his teeth)
Don't you threaten me! My family has nothing to do with this!

Obviously, the other party was hung up. Thomas smashes the phone down, shaking with rage. Alfred stands in the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

doorway. Thomas turns and looks at him helplessly.

Like two imps, Martha and Bruce appear at the door.

MARTHA
Hey, slowpoke! Hurry up and get into your costume or we'll leave without you!

With visible effort, Thomas shifts gears, smiles, and glides out the doorway.

THOMAS
You asked for it! You better sit down, though. I'm not sure you'll be able to handle it.

BRUCE
(wryly)
We'll try.

CUT TO:

Bruce and Martha.

Waiting restlessly in the library.

BRUCE
(yelling)
Dad... come on!!

As if on cue, Thomas appears bedecked in a majestic bat costume which itself looks like the showpiece of some magnificent opera.

MARTHA
Thomas! You're splendid!

BRUCE
Wow!

ALFRED
Sir, you've outdone yourself!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOMAS
Well, after all, it is Der Fleidermaus, isn't it? What more appropriate costume than the king of the bats? I am the chairman of the board, you know.

BRUCE
(rolling his eyes)
Yeah, Dad, so you've told us a million times.
(beat)
What's this opera about again, Dad?... some guy who changes into a bat? Is he like Dracula?

MARTHA
You'll just have to wait and see! Quick, before we leave, I just want to do one thing.

Bruce groans.

MARTHA
And don't groan!

CUT TO:

Alfred taking a home movie of the family with a super-8 camera. Everyone is mugging for the camera, looking particularly absurd in their elaborate costumes. We see the warmth and connectedness of this family. On the very last frame, Alfred zooms in on Thomas, who, as the self-appointed auteur, is waving him in toward the camera for a closeup.

CUT TO:

THE GOTHAM OPERA HOUSE

The Waynes arriving in a flurry of activity, surrounded by press and a lot of attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Other dignitaries and socialites arrive in spectacular and garrish costumes.

CUT TO:

THE OPERA

Phillipe Petit's magical rendition of Der Fleidermaus. Bruce watches raptly.

The CAMERA PANS the audience and keeps noticing two unsavory looking masked characters sitting in the audience. They look distinctly out of place. Although covert, they are obviously fixated on Thomas and his family.

CUT TO:

THE MASQUERADE BALL

It's a lavish affair. Mobs of people mill about in full costume. Again, we see the same two characters lurking about, shadowing the Wayne family.

Midnight. The party is thinning out. People are leaving. Amidst well wishes and goodbyes, the Waynes exit the building

THOMAS
It's a beautiful night. Why don't we walk home?

MARTHA
In this get-up?

A clock strikes the hour.

THOMAS
(smiling spaciously)
Why not? Listen, it's midnight, the witching hour. We'll fit right in!

Martha turns to Bruce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARTHA
You want to humor this guy!

BRUCE
(in a thick
Transylvanian
accent)
Maybe we'd better. I don't want him to fly in the window tonight. and suck out all my blood.

MARTHA
(scoping the bat suit)
You have a point there. So, what are we waiting for?

Like the true comrades they are, the three link arms and swing off down the street. As they move away from us, their silhouettes become even more charmingly eccentric and somehow... vulnerable: A towering batman, a delicately shimmering fairy queen and a small whirling harlequin. Their laughter wafts back toward us in happy ripples. The streets glisten and gleam, beautifully polished by an evening rain.

As they are approaching the corner, and our hearts are melting for this uniquely harmonious family, the unthinkable [redacted] ice cream truck slowly turns the

[redacted]

Sola's mother is yoked, on her knees, her forehead touch[redacted] the ground. A younger Tal Hajus grabs her head.

SOLA (V.O.)
He tortured her, but she did not tell

CONTINUED:

It is Bruce's contention that Rupert is the man who ordered his parents' death. Since there were several other crime lords involved in the conspiracy against his father, however, Bruce has never been able to positively pinpoint the man who gave the order. Gordon beseeches Bruce to let go of it and to get on with his own life, cautioning that his preoccupation with Thorne is unhealthy and poisoning his other relationships.

All of this is suggested in very quick scenes counterpointed by scenes of Alfred observing Bruce's obsessiveness with gentle concern; quietly feeding him; nudging him into bed when he's fallen asleep at some near-impossible task in exhaustion; combing his hair; thrusting a bag lunch into his hands as he rushes out for yet another class; putting him to bed at night, and comforting him when the nightmares come.

As Bruce's abilities and interests grow, the caliber of equipment in his basement hideaway escalates in scope and sophistication to eventually include an elaborate gym and trapeze set, highly evolved criminology and science labs, state of the art computers, processor and tracking systems, etc. -- all embellished with Bruce's massive trophy collection and obvious precursors of the Batcave. Only Alfred knows of the existence of the basement which is accessible through a secret panel hidden behind a fake bookcase in the mansion's library.

CONTINUED:

Each night before he goes to sleep, Bruce lies in his darkened bedroom and ritualistically watches the shaky home movie taken the night of his parents' death. Each night, his last impression before oblivion is his father in a bat costume, bookended by his mother and his younger self, gesturing in what was intended as silly gag, but which, in the boy's haunted mind, has taken on new proportions: beckoning him into some imagined reunion in the silent hereafter of the screen.

LONG DISSOLVE:

Years have passed. Against a SHOT of the teeming city, a newspaper spins towards us, emblazoned with a screaming headline:

JOKER ESCAPES PRISON!
Vows revenge against Mayor Rupert Thorne.
Commissioner Gordon promises immediate action...

CUT TO:

BRUCE, now a heartbreakingly handsome young man in his palatial but chicly spartan downtown office. The newspaper we have just seen sits on his desktop. His secretary buzzes him, announcing that Commissioner Gordon is on the phone. Bruce smiles and takes the call. Gordon asks if he's seen the headlines and hints that he's worried about Bruce's reaction. Bruce assures him that he'll leave the Joker to the proper authorities. His eyes, however, say otherwise. Bruce's parting comment is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

a barb about the rampant corruption sanctioned under Thorne's administration.

That day, the Joker begins a carefully masterminded reign of terror in Gotham City that starts with a whimper, but builds to a bang.

1. He releases all the animals from the Gotham Zoo, creating panic in the streets, especially when a lion gamely gets on a loaded bus at one stop and casually gets off at another.

2. He preempts various television shows, ridiculing guest stars, interrupting love scenes, inventing the news, forecasting fake weather -- generally disrupting and infiltrating the airwaves.

3. He has all the windows of Gotham's many towering skyscrapers painted black so no one can see out.

4. He makes all the subways go backwards and for an entire hour of prime-time television, all shows are blocked out and replaced with this Jokerian message:

All work and no play makes
the Joker a dull boy.

That evening, Bruce is playing chess with Alfred. The television is on in the background, broadcasting the Joker's inflammatory propaganda. At 10:00, "The Love Boat" suddenly appears, suggesting that -- for the time being at least -- we've returned to normal programming... except when we get to the guest stars: Tom Bosley, Cloris

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Leachman, Andy Warhol and... the Joker!... who materializes like some coked-up crazy Eddie, and gleefully promises a continued campaign of chaos.

Later that night, Bruce restlessly paces in the basement. His turmoil and inner tension is palpable. For the first time in many years he watches the time-worn home movie. Again, we come to the familiar moment... his father... wearing the bat costume... silently beckoning to him. In mid-gesture, the film breaks, creating a prophetic impression. Once again, it's as if his father is inviting him into some longed-for secret world.

Suddenly, the film flies out of the projector and rolls across the floor. Decisively, Bruce crosses the room, opens a drawer, takes out a box, removes layers of tissue, a cowled headpiece, gloves, boots, a black bat insignia on a yellow field, decorating the chest. Almost in a trance, Bruce begins to undress.

DISSOLVE TO:

Batman, dressed in full regalia, studies himself in a full-length mirror.

BATMAN
(to his fantastic mirror image)
'Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Prince of Darkness is born!

With the magnificent cape streaming behind him, Batman slips out a window and is gone.

CUT TO:

GOTHAM CITY - NIGHT

Batman prowls the city, using his specially designed suction gloves and kneepads, which enable him to scale walls, buildings, etc. It's Christmas time. He glides through the twinkling city as close to experiencing joy as we've seen him since childhood. Christmas decorations sparkle gaily. Arriving at Gotham Square, a part of the city reminiscent of Rockefeller Center in New York, Batman encounters a curious spectacle: The Joker, surrounded by shocked onlookers, is laughing insanely and via some sort of elongated fuse, launching the beautifully decorated 100 feet tall Christmas tree into the night like a rocket.

All of this is accompanied by a highly theatrical monologue centering around the fact that since the Joker missed the last fifteen Christmases in prison, like the Grinch of Dr. Seussian fame, he plans to expunge Christmas from Gotham City.

Much to the Joker's pleasure, Batman arrives, challenges him and they have their first confrontation -- a violently

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

choreographed ballet/fight which rages through the square, across the ice-skating rink (punctuated by all the requisite silliness of pratfalls), and eventually surfaces on the rooftop of the Gotham City News building, in front of their gargantuan trademark clock. The fight ends when the Joker violently pushes Batman off the roof, who somersaults 20 stories and only narrowly misses death by landing gracefully in a protruding awning. When Batman looks up, the Joker is gone.

All of this is witnessed from below by hundreds of breathless spectators and stunned police, creating a flurry of speculation in the next morning's news media: What and who is the Batman? Is he another flamboyant criminal or a crime fighter? Is he here to vanquish the Joker or is he an ally?

Over breakfast, Alfred places the morning paper beside Bruce's plate and gives him a knowing look. Bruce reads aloud Rupert Thorne's unctuous promises to capture the Joker with disgust. He makes the bitter observation that Rupert's only motivation for capturing the Joker is in saving his own skin.

Commissioner Gordon calls Bruce, asking him pointedly if he knows anything about this Batman character, and warns him about taking the law into his own hands. Bruce feigns total innocence on all counts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As the days pass, the rampant mayhem perpetrated by the Joker increases drastically, achieving total panic throughout the city. His pranks careen from the simply whimsical (he paints the entire city wildly candy-striped colors) to the downright dangerous.

With the expertise of a master politician, he coerces various union leaders, inducing them to order strikes, so that the city is virtually immoblized without water, power, gasoline, subways, food, etc. Indiscriminately, he has bombs set off at various locations throughout the city, always accompanied by a pathological joke message relating to the specific location. In what, by now, has become a nightly ritual, he preempts television, often dressed in some garrish costume, to merrily announce some new scheme with maniacal delight.

Each night, Bruce dons his bat costume and scours the city, all the while finding his sea-legs as the masked crime fighter. Singlehandedly, he foils a jewel heist, a violent mugging in the city park and interrupts a gangland murder taking place at a Gotham City pier. Prowling like a cat, he searches feverishly for the Joker's lair.

By day, he inhabits his charmingly sardonic Bruce Wayne persona which includes being one of Gotham's primary

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

businessmen and philanthropists, a calling which often throws him into charity and city functions attended by Rupert Thorne. Obviously, there is no love lost between these two. Bruce has yet to ascertain if Rupert is responsible for his father's death.

The next evening, Bruce is preparing for just such an event with obvious trepidation. It's a gala charity benefit scheduled to take place at the Gotham City Opera House. It is the first time he's attended an opera since his parents' death. He's nervous.

CUT TO:

OPERA

It's Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream, and is introducing the dazzling new singer, Silver St. Cloud, in the role of Titania, the Fairy Queen. Despite the obvious psychological underpinnings (or maybe because of them) Bruce is intrigued.

With Wagnerian theatricality, the Joker crashes the opera, perpetrating the kind of mayhem that every kid, bored out of his mind at the opera, would dream about -- magnified to Dr. Strangelovian proportions. The finale is a riotous fireworks display so violent that people flee in terror and many are actually hurt.

Bruce locates Silver, and leads her to safety via a

CONTINUED:

backstage route. The Joker departs flashily in his Joker-mobile, spraying a myriad of colored smoke bombs and distinctly unfunny machine-gun fire.

Bruce escorts Silver home. After years of psychic and physical abstinence, he stays the night.

CUT TO:

SAME NIGHT

The Joker's headquarters, located in the penthouse of a towering industrial building brandishing a large sign: "Novelties: All your needs for every occasion. Parties. Jokes. Magic."

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S PENTHOUSE

It's like the set for a Fellini movie. An impromptu TV station has been set up in a corner, featuring a red-carpeted spiral staircase lifted straight out of Gone With The Wind. Bizzare experiments in varying stages of development fill different rooms. Against one wall is an enormous fishtank filled with "Joker Fish," which we learn are normal fish that have been exposed to his recently refined "Grimacing Gas" which gives them wildly grimacing mouths.

The Joker reclines at his desk in a gigantic chair

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

most closely resembling a throne. A true megalomaniac, the Joker has obviously elected himself the king of his bizzare world. In a conversation with one of his scientists (an ex-cellmate nuclear physicist from prison days), we ascertain that the Grimacing Gas is a deadly nerve gas which can be fatal if administered in large enough doses. When one of the fish dies convulsively and sinks to the bottom of the tank, the Joker laughs gleefully, executing a mad dance while rambling insanely about his plans to destroy Thorne, Batman and to promote total anarchy in Gotham.

Later, in a frightening conference with his ghoulish accomplices, the Joker elaborates his plan to stage a mock election, nominate himself as Mayor of Gotham City, and to celebrate with a victory parade comprised of giant parade floats. The capper is that one float will be filled with enough Grimacing Gas to wipe out the entire population of Gotham City. Only subscribers to the Joker's cause will be spared death...

CUT TO:

SILVER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Unable to sleep, Bruce carefully rises, kisses Silver gently and heads back to Wayne Manor. For the first time, he enters the now fully appointed Batcave via a secret entrance: a nearby barn located several hundred

CONTINUED:

yards from the mansion which has been connected to the Batcave by an underground tunnel. Once inside, Bruce parks next to his recently perfected masterpiece: the Batmobile!

As always, Albert is waiting for him with food and quiet comfort. He tells Bruce that during the night the Joker took over a local comedy club (a la the Comedy Store or The Improv), and after delivering an insane monologue of Billy Crystal jokes to his terrified captive audience, he released a lethal dose of Grimacing Gas, killing everyone in violent paroxysms of laughter.

The next morning and in a canny move, Commissioner Gordon calls Bruce and tells him that he wants to directly enlist Batman's aid in their fight against the Joker. He asks Bruce if he can get a message to Batman to that effect. Bruce says he'll try. The outcome is a lifelong collaboration between Batman and the police via Commissioner Gordon, and the creation of the Bat-signal as a means of contact between them.

In an attempt to maintain some semblance of normalcy in the city, Bruce and Silver decide to attend the yearly benefit for the Gotham City Crippled Children's Fund, which, in an effort to maintain security, is heavily guarded by Gotham police. The event is an

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

elaborately orchestrated circus, housed in the Newtown Sports Arena, which is a suburb of Gotham.

Despite all their precautions, however, the circus has been infiltrated by the Joker, a fact which becomes uncomfortably obvious when we notice while scanning the performers, three familiar characters: The PENGUIN, nattily dressed as the circus ringmaster; the RIDDLER, artfully disguised as a clown; and CATWOMAN, sexily decked out as a trapeze artist and dangling gracefully in the rafters on a trapeze.

After the requsite fanfare and preliminary acts, the main attraction of the evening is introduced: The Flying Graysons, the world's most renowned high-wire act, comprised of JOHN and MARY GRAYSON and their ten-year-old son, DICK. Their act is particularly dangerous because they work without a net.

After executing a spectacular series of aerial somersaults, the family leaps in tandem from their high pedestal, aiming for a waiting trapeze. Horribly, the ropes break (due to judiciously applied acid by Catwoman) and the three tumble through space, accompanied by horrified screams from the audience. Miraculously, young Dick's lighter weight causes him to veer into a nearby pole, deflecting his fall into a stack of hay

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

bales piled along the sidelines. The effect is that of a baby bird falling out of a tree into a nest. His parents, however, fall to their deaths.

Bruce is jolted to his feet as if by an electric shock. Immediately, the Joker appears high above the audience, screaming like a harlequin banshee, and claims credit for the foul deed. In the attendant chaos, he and his minions effect their escape in a smokescreen of fire and confetti bombs.

Accompanied only by the throbbing of his own heartbeat and nearly blinded by nauseating waves of deja vu, Bruce makes his way to Dick, who is sobbing beside the mangled bodies of his parents. Wordlessly, he scoops the boy into his arms and carries him through the crowd to his car with an ashen-faced Silver by his side.

Once in the car, and hugging the shaking boy to his chest, Bruce says as much to himself as to the frightened boy:

BRUCE
I just want you to know that as long as I live, you will never be alone.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

"RETRIBUTION. FAMILY."

Weeks have passed. A short scene establishes that Bruce has begun legal proceedings to adopt Dick Grayson as his ward. Dick is a charmer: a clever little wise-ass with a loving heart. He's pale-skinned to the point of ghostly, defined by an alert little face and carrot-colored hair (sort of a new-wave Artful Dodger). Although still gawkily puppyish, he moves with an elegance and agility acquired through years of intense acrobatic training.

We see Dick becoming less haunted and gradually integrating into Wayne family life, as well as the positive effects it is having on Bruce -- all noted gratefully by Alfred and Silver. Some age-old coldness in him is being thawed by his love for the boy. They are healing each other.

In a much-hyped media event, the Joker, dressed up for the occasion as the Mad Hatter, is "interviewed" on television by Barbara Walters, who is obviously tied up and being held at gunpoint. To her credit, given the insane circumstances, she keeps her cool and conducts the circus-like proceedings professionally. Between narcissistic preening and lunatic ravings, the Joker announces his intention to run for Mayor of Gotham City

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

against Rupert Thorne! His platform espouses the logic of a madman: vote for him and he'll end the city-wide rampage of terror and mayhem for which he is responsible. It's political Catch 22, which the Joker admits with great humor.

In the ensuing days, the Joker makes good his threats and steps up his terrorist tactics, reducing the city to a carnival-like war zone.

In a move that shocks the already traumatized city, the Joker stages a mandatory "debate" between the city's "mayoral candidates," himself and Rupert Thorne. The entire program is broadcasted city wide and mediated by Wally George, whose level of psychosis somewhat rivals the Joker's.

It's an exhibitionist's dream come true, and the Joker rises to the occasion, magnificently turning in a performance that is both seductive and surprisingly logical. Thorne is terrified.

After a joke-laced harangue at Thorne's expense, the Joker plays out his final hand. Without a hint of warning, he pulls out a gun and repeatedly shoots Thorne in the chest! Once again, the police arrive too late, and the Joker escapes via a prearranged back route.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

That evening, the Wayne household is bustling with activity as calls are traded between Batman, Bruce Wayne and Commissioner Gordon, giving us some insight into the schizophrenia of Bruce's life. In time, they begin to hatch a plan. To add to the drama, Bruce is adroitly fielding Dick's pleas to accompany him on this mission. Finally, after relentless youthful pressure, Bruce categorically refuses, saying that Dick is too young and ill-prepared for the rigors of crime-fighting. Dick, we suspect, is unconvinced.

The next day and to his delight, the Joker receives a surprising challenge via a giant billboard unveiled over Gotham's Times Square: Bruce Wayne for Mayor! A vote for Bruce is a vote for Gotham City!

Enroute through Gotham to his hastily devised head-quarters, Bruce surveys his city with disbelief. It looks like a tableau from Pinnochio's Pleasure Island sequence. Stores and buildings are bombed, abandoned and boarded up with hastily scrawled "closed" signs in every door and window. The streets are pockmarked from explosives and violently splashed with Day-Glo swirls of color. The city is literally wall-papered with the Joker's psychedelically threatening campaign posters: Vote for the Joker or the joke's on you! Passing a newsstand, we notice that literally every

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

magazine features a different Joker portrait, including the Joker as Time's "Man of the Year."

Like a Mardis Gras, Hari Krishna parade, the streets are filled with Joker converts which includes every subscriber to every lunatic television cult religion as well as Gotham's mushrooming criminal element.

On alternating street corners, Bruce notices an alarming number of hastily erected Joker boothes, manned by propaganda spouting Joker fans who are aggressively passing out Joker masks to all their enlistees. The masks are unusually elaborate in design, arousing Bruce's suspicions.

Slowing his car to a snail's pace, and adopting an appropriately goony attitude, Bruce hits up a glazed-eyed proselytizer for a mask. Once inspected, it corroborates his darkest suspicion: although they're gaily painted in bull's-eye colors, they're gas masks!

Turning down a wide boulevard which is the 5th Avenue of Gotham, Bruce encounters an awesome sight: thousands of people line the sidewalks facing the street, which is being fanatically monitored by the recently appointed Joker police, who are dressed in candy-striped clown clothes, sporting a squirting flower in their lapels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At least half of the spectators are wearing Joker masks, giving them a garrishly other-worldly, insect-like appearance.

With typical Jokerian humor, election eve has been designed to coincide with Christmas Eve; and, to celebrate both events, the Joker has promised a dazzling parade, which is like a mixture of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and Disneyland's Electric Light Parade. Due to the clues we've gotten along the way, we know the parade has another purpose.

Waiting in flubbery rows at the end of the street, Bruce surveys the giant, billious and helium-filled floats, crafted in various shapes and sizes. As he cruises by the floats, scrutinizing them thoughtfully, he gets it:

BRUCE
O' my God... that's it!

When Bruce arrives at his headquarters, he receives a congratulatory joke bouquet of squirting flowers and a box of exploding cigars from "Guess Who?" Grimly, he places a call to Commissioner Gordon, hurriedly explaining his deductions about the Joker's plan.

Via his conversation, we learn that the Joker has filled at least one float with deadly Grimacing Gas which he plans to release during the parade. Every person not

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

wearing a Joker gas mask will be killed. It's a lunatic's insurance for winning the election.

Bruce hurries to a small, well-guarded television studio and delivers a fiery speech, challenging the city's voters to resist the Joker's revolutionary tactics, and to cast their votes against him. It is a highly charged moment reminiscent in tone of the young Thomas Wayne. When he is finished, Bruce dashes into an empty storeroom to change into the Batman.

As Batman glides over the rooftops, he passes various election poles where people are voting. In a typical Jokerian bad joke, the poles are barbershop-striped and designated NORTH (the Joker) and SOUTH (Bruce Wayne).

Camouflaged in various disguises, we notice Commissioner Gordon and the police quietly infiltrating the parade.

CUT TO:

JOKER'S HEADQUARTERS

The Joker has just been handed polling statistics by a quaking statistician. The polls indicate a Bruce Wayne sweep. The Joker goes berserk and shoots the little man on the spot. Screaming with fury, the Joker demolishes his headquarters in an infantile tantrum. Calmed by the sight of his deadly fish tank, he collects himself and exits.

CUT TO:

STREET

It's pandemonium. The Joker smiles with perverse pleasure when he sees the streets filled with garrish caricatures of himself. As he approaches the section of the street harboring the waiting parade floats, a digital message flashes across the top of the Gotham/Times building: Bruce Wayne wins election in landslide victory. Merry Christmas! The people alternately react with confusion or ebullience.

The Joker seems unphased, and hastens down the parade-filled street disinterestedly passing a giant, weightless Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, Yosemite Sam, the Cheshire Cat, Pinnochio, Chewbacca and stops, pointedly, at a darling ten-story-high teddy bear float tethered to the ground by trailing ropes anchored by burly bodyguard-types.

From out of the shadows emanates a familiar voice.

BATMAN
Hey, chalk-face!

It's Batman, standing fifty yards away and on top of the Batmobile, cape streaming out behind him.

THE JOKER
Well... Well... Well. Cute outfit. Didn't I see you in a production of <u>La Cage Aux Folles</u>?

BATMAN
Feel like picking on somebody your own size?

THE JOKER
Are we speaking physically or mentally?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With lightning reflexes, the Joker produces a gun and takes aim at Batman, who counters with a flick of the wrist, sending Batarang flying, exploding the gun out of the Joker's hand. The Joker scrambles after the gun and runs, shouting a command to his burly guards who ominously start closing in on Batman. Using all the skill acquired in his years of training, Batman fights the men off en masse, the result of which is that they let loose the restraining ropes on the teddy bear float containing the deadly gas and releasing it into a gradual upward trend.

THE JOKER
(screams)
You fools... That's the gas!

Cornered by Batman, the desperate Joker shoots the unfortunate group tethering a nearby clown float, and hitches a ride on a trailing rope just as the float becomes airborne. Thinking fast, Batman leaps up and follows suit. Dangling below the float on their different ropes, Batman and the Joker rise serenely above Gotham City and slide through the night.

The Joker alternately shoots at Batman, who avoids his bullets by acrobatically swinging back and forth on his rope like some sort of gothic Tarzan, and at the gas-filled teddy bear float, which jauntily bobs past them on its peaceful journey up into the sky. Thankfully, he misses, and soon the float is beyond shooting range, sailing out into the hemisphere.

CONTINUED:

As they glide over the rooftops, Batman looks below and realizes they are directly approaching the roof of the Gotham City Natural History Museum. Thinking fast, he simultaneously rips a plastic grenade from his utility belt, lobs it at the float and drops to the museum roof now directly below.

A split second later, the grenade explodes, ripping a hole in the side of the clown float, sending it and its harlequin passenger spinning wildly through the air on a helium joyride.

Narrowly missing the museum roof, Batman crashes instead through a huge skylite and falls to the floor in a dazzling shower of broken glass. Dazed from the fall, he lies for a moment in the eery silence of the museum.

Suddenly, with an ear-splitting crash, the careening clown float with the Joker attached, explodes through a huge window and sails to the floor, landing squarely on the still-groggy Batman.

Screaming with hysterical glee, the Joker leaps at Batman in a frenzy, and with the unadulterated strength of a madman, pins him to the ground and points the gun at his temple.

CONTINUED:

Just when it looks as if all is lost, a faint ripple of wind shudders through the museum... a hiss of a breeze accompanied by the dull sensation of tiny fluttering, as if heralding the entrance of a small bird.

A high, piping laugh pierces the darkness, commanding the Joker's attention. Perched atop the gigantic arcing frame of a gleaming brontasaurus skeleton... a flash of red and green, a devilish mask... it's Robin, who we immediately recognize as Dick Grayson.

ROBIN
Heard any good jokes, lately?

Batman seizes the moment and karate chops the gun out of the Joker's hand. The Joker rolls away, planting a vicious kick on a brontasaurus foreleg as he does so. The result is another childhood dream: the giant bones collapse in a domino-effect skeleton dance. Finding himself sitting on air, Robin executes a spectacular swan dive from his high perch, landing squarely on his feet. He proudly flashes a grin at Batman who tousles his hair.

BATMAN
Fancy meeting you here. I didn't think you were the museum type!

In one beautifully synchronized movement, the fighting duo leaps into action, flashing after the disappearing form of the Joker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATMAN
(to Robin)
I'm going in alone. Find a phone and call the Commissioner. You know the code.

ROBIN
But...

Batman gives him a complex look.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Okay.

Robin sprints down the hall. Batman enters the room. Unbeknownst to the Joker, his infrared vision pinpoints him immediately.

CUT TO:

BATMAN'S POV

Streaming red waves of heat and electrical currents outlined in a Joker shape. It's like an incarnation of the devil!

Batman pounces. The Joker aims the gun and manages to get one shot off before Batman hits him, full force, and wrestles the gun away from him. Gripped by a monumental rage, Batman smashes the Joker to the ground and puts the gun to his head.

BATMAN
Before I destroy you, tell me! Who ordered you to kill Thomas and Martha Wayne!

The Joker smiles beautifically and laughs insanely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A horrible mocking laugh that creeps in under Batman's skin and nearly pushes him beyond the breaking point.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
(screaming; nearly strangling him)
Who killed them!!??

THE JOKER
(triumphantly)
The joke's on you, Bruce. I beat you to it! It was Rupert Thorne. I killed the man that killed your parents! But you can't kill me. You can't. That would make you like them!

There is an unbearable moment of tension as Batman wrestles with his darkest self, the gun poised, shaking, at the Joker's temple. Robin watches from the doorway, not breathing. From out of the darkness, a large paw of a hand claps onto Batman's shoulder.

COMMISSIONER GORDON
(gently)
You've done your job, man. It's over now. Let us have him.

We see the tension in Batman's body slowly relax. The spell is broken. Batman drags himself off the Joker and hands the gun to Gordon. The Joker is handcuffed, read his rights and led away by a squadron of guards.

THE JOKER
(to Batman)
Oh, by the way. I'll keep our little secret. It's more fun that way! I don't have many playmates who can give me a run for my money. And as the saying goes... with friends like you...

Batman glares at him with hatred. The Joker laughs his insane laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATMAN
I have to get out of here!

He turns to Robin, who half-smiles his understanding. Together, the incredible duo stride away through the ruin of the museum.

COMMISSIONER GORDON
(calling after them)
Gotham City thanks you.

Batman and Robin half-turn, acknowledge him with a brief wave, and continue out of the building... into the night... free from demons... home.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

NEXT MORNING - CHRISTMAS

Bruce, Robin, Alfred and Silver are sitting around a magical Christmas tree in the Wayne manor living room, laughing gaily and opening a mountain of presents.

Happiness fills the air.

Finally, when they've waded through all the presents, Alfred passes out silver cups of Christmas punch for a celebrating toast. Giggling charmingly, Silver notices one last present nestled under the tree.

SILVER
Oh, look. There's one more!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Smiling, Bruce, who is closest to the tree, reaches down to retrieve it: bright purple and green-striped paper, a toy Jack-in-the-box nestled in the bow...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

The Joker, laughing.

THE END

THIS TREATMENT WAS PREPARED

BY WARNER BROS. INC.

SCRIPT PROCESSING DEPARTMENT

(818) 954-4632